1: Kruger M-5 (ca. 1930) 1936 FX14 Lovedu FX14

32. Therefore the praise-song of chief Mŏžaži says: "Mŏžaži— when the sun sets—trader in the hut;[37] I sleep on the road,[38] I am a widow,[39] I have no one who watches me. I am the elephant-knife on the hip in the sheath;[40] she eats meat,[41] the trader in the house."

33. The second chief was Masala-Navô. She was given this name by the dead (queen), when she was raised to the throne. She governed also like the other chiefs. Her praise-song says: "Mmasala-Navô,[42] speak good (words). When you are speaking bad (words), the tribe will split. It was the chief Khethubudi of Mashonaland who said: "I do not like the people.—Finally I got an ulcer on my back and said: 'People, scratch me.'"[43]—The hawk, at which they look with fear, they look at me with hearts full of hatred."[44]

34. This queen had milk-cows. They were called "the selected" of the chief-kraal. They were milked by a head-man who had been chosen to milk them. When they were milked, and the carrier of the milk was carrying it to bring it home—when it happened that he met people, they had to kneel down until he had passed. This was a custom to honour the food of the chief. When a person was standing when the milk passed near him, it was a great crime. These cows were not kept in one kraal together with the cattle of the village, but they remained separated.

35. Furthermore chief Mmasala-Navô hated the believers (in Christ). A Christian was not allowed to enter the chief's kraal. When a Christian had a case to be settled in the chief's Court, he had to sit outside the village under a tree; he sent his words through the messenger of the chief.

36. Chief Khesêthwane who governs to-day, and who is also called Mŏžaži, is the third female chief. She produces rainfall. She allows the Christians to enter the official meeting-place and her village. She is fond of education. A church has been built near the meeting-place of

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[37] It is not necessary that she goes round to "sell" the rain. People are coming to her to buy in her hut.

[38] Like a prostitute (?)—she was not married but is said to have had many lovers.

[39] Because she had no husband.

[40] Praise of her blood-thirstiness.

[41] She killed her chief counsellor always after a short service.

[42] "She who remains with them."

[43] That chief thought that he was able to live without needing other people, until he became ill and was unable to help himself. Then he was obliged to call for assistance.

[44] Praise of the cruelty of the Queen.

1: Kruger M-5 (ca. 1930)1936 FX14 Lovedu FX14

the royal kraal. The children of the chief's kraal are attending school at her command.

37. Chief Khesêthwane does not allow that a person enters her kraal with shoes on his feet. When somebody approaches the main entrance, he must take off the shoes and leave them outside the main-entrance that he may be allowed to enter the meeting-place.

The beginning of the government of female chiefs in Loveduland

1. The last male chief is Mogôdô. He had two sons : Malegudu and Kheêbe. These young men quarrelled about the chieftainship of their father when he was still alive. Now they had a sister who was called Možaži. So the chieftainship was given her that she might be the ruler of the tribe. The brothers were driven away.

2. When a person is made chief in Loveduland, he must be given the fire-stick and the water-calabash. Now they gave the sister the fire-stick and the calabash that she might bring it to Malegudu, the elder brother. But it is said that they had been strengthened by magic charms which make a person mad who looks at them with his eyes. He will behave like a mad person, he will leave his home, go away and move to another country and dwell there.

3. They say when Malegudu had looked at the fire-stick and the calabash, he left the land of his father, went to Vendaland and died there. Kheêbe the younger son who had quarrelled with him about the chieftainship was treated in the same way as the elder one. He left the country went to Thôvôlô[45] and died there.

4. So the chieftainship was given the daughter of Mogôdô namely Možaži I. She had a daughter called Masala-Navô. She followed her mother in the chieftainship.

5. Masala-Navô had no child until her old age. But she had a younger sister. She had two children. The first child was a boy, the second one a girl. The girl-child called Khesêthwane was chosen to be chief. She is Možaži who governs still to-day.

[45] In Portuguese-East-Africa.

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
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CHAPTER I

PAGEANTS OF THE PAST

Fame of Mujaji transformer of the clouds—the cycle of the kings—the cycle of the queens—from the pageants to the people.

FAME OF MUJAJI, TRANSFORMER OF THE CLOUDS

THE Lovedu are not numerous and, from a military point of view, they are insignificant. Yet among their neighbours and among tribes as far away as the Zulu they have a great reputation. The fame of their queen, Mujaji, is spoken of even by white men as if it were the fame of the monarch of a mighty empire. That is doubly curious. For, on the one hand, the nineteenth century in the southern sub-continent of Africa opens with the Napoleonic career of Chaka, king of the Zulu, whose exploits, followed by great displacements of peoples and spectacular reconstructions of tribes, overshadow everything else. On the other hand, the Lovedu, at the end of the century, ignominously surrendered to the European without a shot being fired.

Upon what basis has Mujaji, queen of an obscure tribe in the far north-eastern corner of the Transvaal, built her fame? By 1800 the kingdom of the Lovedu had already existed for two centuries in the seclusion of the sheltering foothills of the Drakensberg. It was undistinguished among its far mightier neighbours, the Venda, the Pedi, and even the Ɗɔkwa. A mere glance at the map shows their insignificance beside the overwhelming masses of Shangana-Ṭonga, now almost completely encircling them. They were too microscopic even to be seen on the stage of the sub-continent, when mighty empires succumbed and new nations were born. Nevertheless, it was amid these convulsions, even as a challenge to them, that the kingdom of the Mujajis arose to prominence. The Lovedu kings had always been sacred kings; they had a reputation for rain-making, but it was no unique reputation, shared as it was by several of their neighbours. Among the Lilliputian tribes who had penetrated the geographical barriers isolating the Lovedu lowveld—the tsetse-fly belt east and north along the enveloping curve of the Limpopo, the Drakensberg on the south and the escarpment on the west—the Lovedu could claim precedence and ascendancy. But if the Zulu legions or any one of the pillaging hordes which their ravages had set into motion had violated the sanctuary of Ɓulovedu, little would have survived of the Mujajis.

To the Zulu, so we are told by Bryant, their historian, Mujaji was the greatest magician of the north. Queen of locusts and of drought, a four-breasted marvel, her name struck terror in the hearts of would-be enemies, and her fame surpassed that even of Mantatisi, the ferocious female tyrant who was leading the Kololo (Tɬokwa) and laid the foundations of the Rotse empire. Mujaji also it was who magically smote to death dread Zwide, fleeing from Chaka, when he came too near Ɓulovedu, even though it was appeasement, not conquest, that he sought. According to

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Bryant, Mujaji was conceived to be immortal, inaccessible, mysterious. That is a fair reflection of the opinion held both by her neighbours and by peoples living far from her domain. Even to her own people she was practically inaccessible, appearing but seldom before them; but she was not immortal, and her mystery, if what is natural and inevitable be mysterious, was the mystic power of transforming the clouds into rain. To this central conception the name Vhulovedu (or Lovedu) bears witness. It is interpreted to mean the country where the cattle and the wealth, even the sisters and the daughters, of foreign chiefs are utterly lost (*hu lova*); they are the offerings for rain which, by accruing to Mujaji, 'waste' the substance of the suppliants. That is the simple secret, out of which the colourful phantasy of the mystery of Mujaji has been elaborated. But it is more than a simple matter. The ancestors of Mujaji also were rain-makers; but they were kings, not queens. If it was the feminine attributes of the ruler which made Mujaji famous among her neighbours, it was, however, the fairness of her skin which captured the imagination of the early European pioneers.

There was enough in the environment itself to lend colour to the picture. The mist-covered mountains are an appropriate setting for the mysterious Mujaji, 'Transformer of the Clouds' (*Khifidula-maru-a-Ḓaja*), for such is her great praise. You can watch from afar how those vapour-laden clouds roll over the hills, constrained, as it were, to pour out their life-giving rain. You can easily imagine the 'huckster in her hut' (*mushava-ndoni*) where it nestles, secreted in the bush, on the edge of a precipice, and from which she sells her rain-making magic. It is well known that there are others who claim the power to constrain the heavens, and it is curious that the greatest among them are or have been women; but by comparison with Mujaji they are mere amateurs, even dabblers and quacks, trespassing upon her prerogative. They can raise storms and send hurricanes, but they do not have the power to withhold rain from the undeserving or to drop it gently upon the deserving with mathematical precision.

If these things appealed to the Native mind, the European was not unimpressed by the babbling of the streams mingling with the sounding of the drums, by the forest-clad ravines that are sanctuaries of ancestral spirits, and by the grotesque kopjes standing out as sentinels guarding the seclusion of savage men. The gateway to Vhulovedu is the Valley of the Devils (Duivelskloof), a name which reflects the reaction of the pioneers to what was regarded as uncanny. But it was particularly the observances and ceremonial requiring the seclusion of the queen, thereby shielding her from the public eye, restraining her movements and preserving unsullied the secrets of her power, which fired the imagination. No European had seen the predecessor of the present queen; and the fairness of her complexion easily became the subject of rumour and phantasy.

That Mujaji II, who died in 1894, was fair cannot be disputed. Fairness is a feature of many Lovedu; it is a highly prized quality. There are tales among Europeans of the adventures of a Portuguese Don Juan in the bad old days; and undoubtedly, by Lovedu legend, a Portuguese trader visited the royal court. But if he had designs upon the queen, as

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is alleged, they were frustrated by the beer which was pressed upon him and rendered him powerless. We cannot attribute the sagacity of the queens, as did Rider Haggard, in his story of *She-who-must-be-obeyed*, to her pure Arabian ancestry. There may be Arab blood in her veins, as there probably is in the veins of all her people; certainly it was not by virtue of any foreign blood that 'She' ruled the tribe, and there is nothing that suggests that the Lovedu owe their organization of culture to an alien conqueror. They are among the politically weakly organized rather than highly centralized Bantu. Haggard's book, which appeared in 1886, correctly emphasizes the high status of women, the pride in female ancestry, the inaccessibility of the queen; and it is upon her immortality that the plot turns. There are also mysterious caves, but people never lived in them.

A more recent picture of the Rain-Queen, based upon local rumour, has been given by Dicke in his *The Bush Speaks* (1936). There she is represented as a crafty woman of mixed white extraction who came with her people from West Africa, and with diabolic cunning induced among her people the belief that she was endowed with the supernatural power that created the clouds so often resting upon her mountains. The rain-priestess soon acquired fame, which she used to found a great kingdom, without, however, relying upon force of arms. To account more adequately for her Machiavellian intrigues, he supposes that her female ancestors were white women, sold to the Arabs on the slave markets of West Africa, who enchanted their masters with their sexual attractions; hence the device of ruling her councillors by remaining unmarried; hence also the many girls, wives of the queen, whose duty was to captivate foreign chiefs, to spy, 'to induce their new masters to attend the festivities, dances, beer drinks, orgies, licentious debaucheries continuously held at the rain-priestess' capital'. Thus we get from Dicke's book a picture of intrigue and debauchery at the capital, supported by assassinations and poisonings, of a kingdom 'built up on immorality, deceit and crime, with no effective striking force to support it'. Her councillors preferred to be ruled by a woman, so that sons of the queen always died before reaching maturity.

There is much else that may be gleaned from local gossip. People are incredulous if one says that one has seen the queen. They remember how Mujaji II deceived Joubert, the Boer general, who, after subjugating the tribe in 1894, was shown, not the true Mujaji, but some one who impersonated her. Forgetting the signal service of the missionary, the Rev. F. Reuter, who intervened on her behalf, they attribute to the cunning of the queen her acquittal of complicity in the rebellion which brought Joubert upon the scene and which led to the defeat and wholesale transportation of several tribes in the lowveld. The diplomacy of the queen had overcome the white man. These are the beliefs that have contributed to the fame of the Lovedu. Whatever basis in reality there may be for them, there is one thing we must note. Mujaji lives no more than twenty-one miles from Duivelskloof. There are flourishing European farms, particularly all along the west and south of her country. Yet the Lovedu have maintained intact their culture and their institutions,

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even the royal constellation of institutions, curious and incongruous with modern conditions though they might be.

And it is to a brief history of the royal institutions, as providing the key to an understanding of the Lovedu, that we shall now proceed. But let us say this: truth is ever stranger than fiction, yet it is also more complex and elusive. The truth that obtains in a strange world, made up of beliefs and values very different from our own, is not easy to recapture; there is no basis, no framework, in our lives for it. We are continuously confounded by inconsistencies and paradoxes, try as we would to turn our conceptions and theories this way and that and even upside down to fit the facts into them. What we shall try to do is to give a visual representation of a few historical events, by way of a series of pageants passing in review. A complete account of the background of the past is far beyond our purpose. It will be sufficient to represent the spirit of these events, leaving for another occasion the question of how far they have a true basis in fact.

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The pageants are not arranged into groups by the tribal historian, but we may present them as if they were colossal cycles, the cycle of the kings and the cycle of the queens. Each cycle opens in mystery, the mystery of an incestuous conception that, instead of corrupting the world, crowns the sinner; it is the ritual vindication of revolutionary change. In the first cycle, which starts just before 1600 and ends two centuries later, the change signalizes the birth of the tribe; then follow wanderings and the settlement of an infant community, which slowly develops to the splendid stature of manhood; and, finally, corruption and dissensions lead to a downfall. But in the midst of the ruins of the catastrophic civil war, which ends the first cycle, a new conception is born and we are at the beginning of the second cycle. The first cycle is handled with simple power; but no single doctrine in it runs its full course. Yet it cannot be mere coincidence that the mystery which marks the birth of the tribe should also be invoked to account for the momentous change from kings to queens.

The cycle of the queens has not yet been completed; it began about 1800 and rapidly ran to the height of its splendour; and its crisis, prematurely brought to a head, has also been indefinitely lengthened by the intervention of a new order of things, ushered in by the advent of the European. We cannot predict when the crisis will end or what the outcome of so prolonged a suspense will be, for the response to the challenge of this new order is now only taking shape and direction. But of this we can be certain, that in a world ordained by the white man there is less room for the vast sweep of the legendary mysteries. The tribal historian is unequal to the task of harmonizing the play of new, intractable forces with the theme of his exalted design.

The history of Lovedu kings and queens is not unlike the legends of the saints. The tribal historian is, of course, not troubled by a sacred theme, by the eternal struggle between Good and Evil; but he must justify historical events, he must bring them into relation with the grand purposes of the tribe. He never consciously tampers with essential facts; he uncritically accepts tradition that has been handed down to him.